

Children as inspectors? Evaluating school music provision for children aged 10–11 years

Janet Mills and Susan O'Neill

*j*mills@rcm.ac.uk
saoneill@umich.edu

What do the views of children, teachers and inspectors about the quality of a school's music provision have in common, or are they all different? A trained expert visited ten primary schools, and her judgements about the music provision for children aged 10–11 were compared with those of the teachers, the children's views about music at the school, and the judgements reported in the school's most recent published inspection report. It was the children, particularly the boys, who agreed most closely with the expert. The judgements of the expert and the inspectors were broadly consonant, but the generalisation in the inspection writing led to its requiring a careful read if weaknesses in some schools' provision for Year 6 were to be detected. While there was general agreement between the expert and the teachers over children's attainment in the more effective schools, the judgements of the teachers were seriously awry in schools that neglected an aspect of the National Curriculum, typically composing. At present, inspectors routinely survey the views of parents and carers, but not those of pupils. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the government department responsible for the inspection of schools in England, is currently considering some limited use of older secondary pupils' views as inspection evidence. The evidence of the research described in this paper is that younger children, in Year 6, could usefully be involved in providing inspection evidence. Indeed, it is possible that they may prove to be rather better 'inspectors' than older children, and also than some of their teachers.

Introduction

This study compares the views of children, teachers, inspectors and an expert about the music provision of a school, and considers whether the views of children could be used to enhance the judgements of inspectors.

The views of primary children about music at school are under-researched. While the business of being a teacher, or a parent, brings one continually into contact with children's views about school, and despite the tendency of teachers to reflect on pupils' comments when informally evaluating their teaching, researchers of music education have tended to give primary children's views a wide berth. The popular education press frequently allows adults who have become eminent to publish their thoughts, as children, on the music lessons that they attended, as they reminisce on the education that has made them great. Some researchers (e.g. Sloboda & Howe, 1992) have used retrospective reports by talented

young musicians about the nature of their early musical experiences and found that many remember their first or early music teachers as 'warm' and 'encouraging'. But while children are children, their thoughts about music at school tend to be overlooked as 'cute', and not the subject of serious research.

The views of secondary children about music at school have received a little more attention, but researchers' questioning has often not moved from asking pupils whether they like music or not (e.g. North *et al.*, 2000), or whether they think that the music lessons they attend are any good or not, often focusing especially on instrumental music lessons (e.g. O'Neill, 1999). Ross & Kamba (1997) trawled the views of pupils in five secondary schools, and found that music appeared to be more than twice as popular as it was in a similar exercise carried out in 1971, a generation earlier. Harland *et al.* (2000) interviewed 79 Year 7 and Year 9 secondary pupils in a further five secondary schools, and came to the conclusion that, across the arts including music, Challenge + Achievement = Enjoyment, and that 'enjoyment' is closely related in pupils' minds to the effectiveness of a lesson. However, it is important to note that 'effectiveness', in the context of John Harland's study, is not necessarily related to a high quality of teaching and learning, or gains in pupils' attainment. Harland *et al.* use the term 'effective' to denote arts education that is reported to produce, intentionally or unintentionally, any 'effects' that fall within a typology devised by themselves: intrinsic and immediate effects; arts knowledge and skills; knowledge in the social and cultural domains; creativity and thinking skills; communication and expressive skills; personal and social development; extrinsic transfer effects. So while a lesson that pupils judged to have enhanced their 'arts knowledge and skills' would be deemed 'effective', the same would be true of a lesson that pupils had found enjoyable, but where nothing had been learnt.

The views of secondary pupils about their education may be complicated by the negativity that can arise during adolescence. Jacquelynne Eccles and her colleagues (Eccles *et al.*, 1996a, 1996b) use the stage-environment fit model to argue that some of the negative psychological and behavioural changes associated with adolescent development result from a mismatch between the needs of developing adolescents and the opportunities afforded them by their social environments. In particular, they propose that the motivational and behavioural problems encountered during early adolescence tend to result from the fact that schools are not providing appropriate educational and social environments for early adolescents. Young people are not likely to do very well, or be very motivated, if they are in social environments that do not meet their psychological needs.

Lawson, Plummeridge & Swanwick (1994) surveyed the views of teachers in 39 primary schools about their coverage of the National Curriculum in music during 1992–3, and found the teachers' reports discouraging. Mills (1994) reported that the lessons that HM Inspectors had observed in primary schools during 1992–3 were usually better than might have been supposed from Lawson *et al.*'s findings. Several researchers (e.g. Barnes & Shinn-Taylor, 1988; Mills, 1989; Wragg *et al.*, 1989) have commented on the low confidence of many generalist primary teachers in their ability to teach music, and it is possible that this helps to explain the mismatch between the findings of Lawson *et al.* and Mills. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) has reported annually that, in England as a whole, music is taught more effectively

than other subjects, although there are, of course, schools where the teaching of music is poor.

Of teachers, pupils and inspectors, only inspectors have views of statutory significance about a school's music provision. Every maintained school in England is inspected, in accordance with the School Inspections Act 1996, at least once every six years. Music is one of the subjects of the National Curriculum that must be reported on in the large majority of inspections. The reports of these inspections are public documents that schools must make available to anyone on receipt of a fee to cover the cost of photocopying, and open access to the reports is provided via the Internet at www.ofsted.gov.uk. All of the inspectors have successfully completed a course of training, and only those with appropriate skills and experience are endorsed to inspect music. However, the inspector who is responsible for music on a primary inspection may also have to cover several other subjects, and constraints of time may force them to base their overall judgements about a school's music provision on a limited number of lesson observations.

The study

The study that is reported in this article was part-funded by OFSTED, and provided an opportunity for the beliefs and attitudes of pupils to be set alongside the views and judgements of teachers, inspectors and an expert. The pupils' views were obtained as part of the Young People and Music Participation Project (YPMPP), which was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and conducted at Keele University from 1998 to 2001. The study involved 1,209 pupils in Year 6 from 36 primary schools, and followed them as they made the transition to secondary school. The findings reported here relate to the responses of all the Year 6 children attending 10 of the 36 primary schools during 1998–9.

Method

The expert, an experienced inspector and teacher, made one-day visits to 10 of the 36 primary schools participating in YPMPP. She interviewed Year 6 pupils and their teachers, read the school's music documentation and, whenever possible, observed pupils, including Year 6 pupils, in music lessons. She recorded her judgements about the music provision of each school using a Likert scale of 1–7 to respond to 38 questions, and also by writing comments under the following headings:

- the standards attained by pupils in Year 6
- the progress they were making in relation to music
- the quality of teaching, both class teaching and instrumental teaching
- pupils' responses to music in class music lessons and instrumental lessons
- the appropriateness of the curriculum planning, in relation to National Curriculum requirements
- the range of opportunities for pupils to become involved in music beyond their lessons
- any aspects of management which had an impact upon music, such as the role of the

music co-ordinator, the quality of the music policy statement, the monitoring of practice, the liaison with visiting instrumental teachers

- accommodation and resources to support teaching and learning in music.

Her visit essentially took a form similar to that of an inspection visit that focused on Year 6, but was markedly more detailed than would usually be possible during a full school inspection. After she had visited the tenth school, she ranked them all according to their overall music provision for pupils in Year 6. The schools were subsequently divided into three groups, reflecting 'high' music provision (the top three schools), 'medium' music provision (the four middle schools) and 'low' music provision (the bottom three schools). It is these three groups that are used in the analysis and labelled 'high', 'medium' and 'low' respectively.

The groupings were compared with data from four sources:

- the expert's ratings of 38 aspects of each school's music provision, referred to above;
- the Year 6 children's ratings of 12 aspects of their music provision. These had been collected as part of YPMPP. A total of 329 Year 6 children in the ten schools had supplied data. The expert did not have access to this data prior to her visit;
- the music teachers' ratings of seven aspects of each child's skills, interest and effort, and the teachers' written comments about their role as music teacher, and the school's classroom music, instrumental music lessons and other musical activities. Teachers in eight of the schools supplied this data;
- the most recent published OFSTED inspection reports for nine of the schools. These were downloaded from the Internet. The tenth school was a new school that had formed by merging two schools that had closed, and it had yet to be inspected. The OFSTED inspections had taken place within 20 months of the expert's visit. The expert did not read any of the inspection reports prior to visiting the schools.

The children, teachers and expert all used Likert scales of 1–7 to record their ratings. In line with inspection practice, all the Likert scales in this study run from 1 (positive) to 7 (negative).

Results

In this section, we compare the hierarchical grouping of the schools (high, medium, low) with: the expert's 38 aspects; the children's 12 aspects; the music teachers' 7 aspects. Finally, we compare the judgements made by the expert, the music teacher, inspectors and pupils at one school ranked 'high' in terms of overall music provision, and one school ranked 'low'.

1. Expert's ratings of aspects of Year 6 music provision¹

Of the 38 aspects that the expert rated (see Table 1), five related particularly closely to the allocation of the schools to three groups:

- **the content, breadth and balance of the Year 6 curriculum.** The significant difference here was between the 'high' group and the other schools. Analysis of the expert's text

Table 1 *The five aspects that related most closely to the expert's ratings*

Aspects	High M ² (SD) ³	Medium M (SD)	Low M (SD)	F ⁴	p ⁵	Group diff (p<.05) ⁶
Content, breadth and balance of the Year 6 curriculum	3.0 (0)	5.0 (0)	6.0 (0)	16.33	.004	H < M/L
Availability of suitably qualified music teachers	2.3 (0.58)	4.3 (0.50)	5.7 (0.58)	28.25	.000	H < M < L
The valuing of musical activity at the school	1.7 (0.58)	3.0 (0)	5.0 (1.0)	22.23	.001	H < M < L
Pupils' attitudes towards musical activities at the school	2.3 (0.58)	3.8 (0.50)	5.7 (1.5)	9.68	.010	H < M < L
The extent to which musical activities are encouraged among all children at the school regardless of ability	2.0 (1.0)	4.0 (1.2)	6.0 (0)	14.00	.004	H < M < L

showed that the schools outside the 'high' group typically neglected composing or taught it poorly, but there were also examples of schools where the children had insufficient opportunity to play a range of instruments, or where the singing was weak. In one school, the children did little other than sing, or have tests that involved listening to a piece of music and writing answers to questions.

- **the availability of suitably qualified music teachers.** There was a significant difference between each of the three groups. Teachers may be 'qualified' to teach music in primary schools either through paper qualifications or through experience, and teachers who are either 'qualified' or 'not qualified' to teach music may be deployed either as specialists or as generalists. There were examples of teachers working as specialists in each of the three groups of schools. However, the specialists working in the 'low' schools, in particular, were not suitably qualified. Their knowledge of the National Curriculum was weak. As part of their classroom lessons, they sometimes taught children to play the recorder or other woodwind instruments, but did so very poorly.
- **the valuing of music at the school.** There was a significant difference between the three groups. In the 'high' schools, music was resourced effectively with teachers, equipment and time, and the senior management took interest in the progress of pupils and shared in their joy in the subject. None of the schools admitted to not valuing music. But lack of value was shown when musical instruments were allowed to fall into disrepair, or when headteachers failed to deal with some obvious problems with the quality of teaching and children's resulting lack of motivation.
- **pupils' attitudes towards music at the school.** Again, there was a significant difference between the groups. In the 'high' schools, classroom music lessons were usually

Table 2 *Pupils' judgements about their schools*

Aspects	High M (SD)	Medium M (SD)	Low M (SD)	F	p	Group diff (p<.05)
How important is music at your school?	3.2 (1.8)	3.4 (2.3)	5.2 (1.9)	1.10	.333	N/a
How many chances are there to do music at your school?	2.9 (1.8)	2.9 (2.1)	4.0 (1.9)	2.28	.104	N/a
How pleased is the music teacher with the work you do in class?	2.9 (1.4)	2.9 (2.1)	3.8 (1.8)	3.73	.025	N/a
How good does your music teacher think you are at playing an instrument?	3.1 (1.8)	3.2 (2.2)	4.3 (1.8)	3.33	.038	N/a
How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?	2.2 (1.7)	2.3 (2.0)	3.2 (2.2)	7.52	.001	H/M < L
How much does your teacher think you could have a job in music?	4.0 (1.9)	3.6 (2.3)	4.7 (2.0)	0.81	.444	N/a
How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?	5.6 (1.9)	3.9 (2.4)	4.3 (2.1)	7.56	.001	H > M/L
How much does your teacher want you to try your best and not worry about mistakes?	2.0 (1.4)	2.1 (1.9)	2.6 (1.8)	1.60	.203	N/a
How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?	2.5 (1.8)	2.9 (2.3)	3.8 (2.1)	5.53	.004	HM < L
How much does your teacher teach music that you like?	3.1 (2.0)	3.2 (2.3)	4.5 (2.2)	7.23	.001	H/M < L
How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?	2.8 (1.7)	2.7 (2.1)	4.1 (2.0)	9.26	.000	H/M < L
How often does your teacher let you choose what musical activities you do?	4.3 (1.9)	3.3 (2.2)	4.9 (2.0)	2.68	.070	N/a

enjoyed by almost all pupils, whether or not they were also learning to play an instrument. In the 'medium' schools, it was rare for pupils to enjoy classroom music unless they were learning an instrument. In the 'low' schools, hardly anyone enjoyed music lessons.

- **the extent to which musical activities are encouraged among all children at the school regardless of ability.** There was a significant difference between the groups. Broadly speaking, the 'high' schools encouraged all pupils, and the 'medium' schools encouraged musical activity among the pupils who were taking instrumental lessons. In the 'low' schools, few children felt encouraged, and those taking instrumental lessons frequently said that their teachers had little knowledge of or interest in their skills.

2. Children's ratings of aspects of music provision⁷

Of the 12 aspects that the children rated (see Table 2), five related particularly closely to the allocation of the schools to the three groups:

- **How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?** The significant difference here was between the 'low' group and the other schools, with pupils in 'low' schools thinking that their teachers took relatively little interest in their exams. This ties in with what children in the 'low' schools who learn instruments said later to the expert about teachers not knowing about their achievements.
- **How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?** Note that it was the 'high' schools where the teachers appeared to show least favouritism, and the 'medium' schools where they appeared to show most. The significant difference here was between the 'high' group and the other schools.
- **How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?** The significant difference here was between the 'low' group and the other schools. Clearly, music was found fairly dull in the 'low' schools, and this ties in with what the pupils later said to the expert about it.
- **How much does your teacher teach music that you like?** The significant difference here was between the 'low' group and the other schools. The mean for pupils in the 'low' schools was greater than 4, the midpoint of the scale. This implies active dislike of the music that the teacher taught.
- **How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?** The significant difference here was between the 'low' group and the other schools. Praise was infrequent in the 'low' schools.

Table 3 separates the responses of boys and girls for the five aspects identified as significant in Table 2 (these are the ones in bold type). Generally speaking, the boys at the 'high' and 'medium' schools were less positive than the girls, while those at the 'low' schools were more positive than the girls. Note, however, that for three of the aspects: (1) 'How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?', (2) 'How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?', and (3) 'How much does your teacher praise you for work in music?', the boys' ratings became less positive from left to right, while the girls were more positive about 'medium' schools than 'high' schools. In a sense, the boys

Table 3 *Boys' and girls' judgements about their music provision*

Aspects	School rank	Girls M (SD)	Boys M (SD)	t	p
How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?	High	1.9 (1.6)	2.5 (1.7)	1.433	NS ⁸
	Med	1.7 (1.2)	3.0 (2.4)	3.793	.000
	Low	3.4 (2.1)	3.1 (2.2)	-0.774	NS
How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?	High	6.0 (1.6)	4.0 (2.0)	-2.186	.031
	Med	3.8 (2.4)	4.9 (2.4)	0.520	NS
	Low	4.7 (2.1)	4.0 (2.1)	-2.141	.035
How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?	High	2.2 (1.8)	2.9 (1.7)	1.687	NS
	Med	2.5 (2.3)	3.2 (2.3)	1.858	NS
	Low	4.4 (2.0)	3.2 (2.0)	-2.787	.006
How much does your teacher teach music that you like?	High	2.8 (1.9)	3.6 (2.0)	1.807	NS
	Med	2.8 (2.1)	3.7 (2.3)	2.361	.020
	Low	4.7 (2.2)	4.6 (2.2)	-0.466	NS
How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?	High	2.6 (1.6)	3.0 (1.7)	1.274	NS
	Med	2.3 (1.9)	3.2 (2.3)	2.654	.009
	Low	4.5 (1.9)	3.7 (2.1)	-1.952	.054

were making judgements that were like those of the expert, while the girls were not. This is a point to which we will return.

All of the pupils who participated in YPMPP were allocated to one of three 'cohorts' according to whether they said that they were learning an instrument (player), said that they had given up an instrument (gave up) or had never learnt an instrument (never). Table 4 separates the responses of the three cohorts for the five aspects that were identified as significant in Table 2:

- **How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?** Overall, the 'nevers' thought that their teacher had less interest in them passing exams.
- **How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?** There was no significant difference between the cohorts. This aspect relates to how a teacher behaves to all pupils, rather than just how a teacher behaves towards the particular pupil, and so the lack of significant difference between cohorts is consistent with the significant differences found between groups of schools.
- **How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?** There was no significant difference between the cohorts. A pattern of 'players' followed by 'gave ups' finding their music classes most interesting emerged in the high and medium schools, but was not sustained in the low schools.
- **How much does your teacher teach music that you like?** Here, there was a significant difference between the 'players' and the other children, with the 'players' showing greater liking of their teachers' choice of music.
- **How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?** Here, again, the

Table 4 *Different cohorts' judgements about their music provision*

Aspects	School rank	Player M (SD)	Gave up M (SD)	Nevers M (SD)	F	p	Group diff by cohort (p<.05)
How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?	High Med Low	1.9 (1.5) 1.9 (1.7) 2.8 (1.8)	2.6 (2.1) 2.8 (2.1) 3.8 (2.6)	2.9 (1.3) 3.9 (2.8) 3.7 (2.5)	2.822 6.377 2.511	NS .002 NS	N>GU/P; GU>P
How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?	High Med Low	5.7 (1.9) 3.8 (2.4) 4.6 (2.1)	5.2 (2.1) 4.0 (2.2) 3.7 (2.1)	5.4 (2.2) 4.3 (2.7) 4.0 (2.2)	0.716 0.268 2.071	NS NS NS	
How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?	High Med Low	2.2 (1.6) 2.7 (2.3) 3.8 (2.2)	2.9 (2.2) 3.0 (2.0) 4.6 (2.2)	3.5 (1.1) 3.6 (2.5) 3.2 (1.6)	3.328 1.013 2.305	.040 NS NS	N>GU/P; GU>P
How much does your teacher teach music that you like?	High Med Low	2.8 (1.8) 2.9 (2.2) 4.2 (2.2)	3.5 (2.0) 3.5 (2.3) 5.6 (1.8)	4.6 (1.9) 4.6 (2.2) 4.6 (2.1)	4.502 4.986 3.745	.013 .008 .027	N>GU/P; GU>P N>GU/P; GU>P GU>N/P; N>P
How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?	High Med Low	2.5 (1.5) 2.5 (2.2) 4.0 (2.1)	3.4 (1.9) 2.7 (1.9) 5.3 (1.7)	3.5 (1.4) 4.2 (1.9) 3.3 (1.8)	3.593 5.403 4.656	.031 .006 .012	N>GU/P; GU>P N>GU/P GU>P/N; P>N

significant difference was between the 'players' and the other children, with the 'players' feeling that they were praised more frequently.

3. Teachers' ratings of children⁹

Table 5 shows that only one of the aspects, teachers' assessments of pupils' skills at composing, was significantly different between the groups of schools. The weaker the quality of music provision in the school, the higher the teachers had judged the pupils' skills at composing to be. The other five rows that relate to skills and interest show a similar pattern, with the children apparently getting better the lower the quality of the provision, although these five rows do not show a significant difference. Obviously, these results differ starkly from those of the expert, who judged pupils' standards to decrease from the 'high' schools to the 'low' schools. It is only in the seventh row, which relates to pupils' effort, that the teachers' judgements are aligned with those of the expert, as the teachers judged pupils' effort to decrease with the quality of provision in the school.

Table 6 provides more detail about teachers' judgements regarding pupils' composing skills. The teachers assessed both boys and girls to be progressively more skilful, the worse the quality of provision in the school. Girls were judged to be better composers than boys,

Table 5 *Teachers' ratings of children*

Aspects	High M (SD)	Medium M (SD)	Low M (SD)	F	p
Skills at playing a musical instrument(s)	3.4 (1.2)	3.2 (1.7)	3.0 (1.4)	1.02	.364
Skills at singing	4.5 (1.2)	3.4 (1.7)	3.2 (1.2)	0.76	.468
Skills at listening and appraising	3.6 (1.0)	3.4 (1.6)	3.2 (1.2)	2.07	.129
Skills at composing	3.7 (1.2)	3.3 (1.7)	2.8 (0.9)	4.70	.010
General interest in music activities	3.3 (1.1)	3.0 (1.5)	2.8 (1.4)	1.19	.305
Interest in playing instruments	3.3 (1.1)	3.0 (1.6)	2.8 (1.2)	1.31	.273
Amount of effort shown in music class	2.9 (1.3)	2.8 (1.5)	3.3 (1.2)	0.72	.487

Table 6 *Teachers' judgements of pupils' composing skills*

Aspect		High M (SD)	Medium M (SD)	Low M (SD)	F	p
Skills at composing	Female	3.6 (1.0)	2.9 (1.5)	2.6 (1.1)	6.314	.013
	Male	3.8 (1.4)	3.8 (1.8)	3.1 (0.7)		
	Player	3.4 (1.2)	2.9 (1.6)	2.5 (1.0)	12.605	.000
	Gave up	4.2 (0.9)	3.7 (1.9)	3.5 (0.8)		
	Never	4.4 (0.5)	4.9 (1.4)	3.0 (0.5)		

although barely so in the 'high' schools. The 'players' were judged to be the best composers in all three groups, and were judged to be progressively more skilful, the worse the quality of the music provision that they were receiving. The 'nevers' in the 'low' schools appeared to be more skilful composers than the 'players' in the 'high' schools.

4. Comparing the judgements of the expert, the inspectors, the teachers and the pupils

This section draws together the judgements of the expert, the teacher, the inspectors and the pupils about individual schools. Two schools are illustrated: School 1 was ranked as a 'high' school and School 2 was ranked as a 'low' school. In order to protect the anonymity of the schools, the text relating to inspection taken from the Internet has been paraphrased in Figures 1 and 2.

School 1

At School 1, music is taught to Year 6 by a class teacher who is timetabled to teach music in some other classes for the equivalent of one day a week. She is a music graduate. In

addition to being the music co-ordinator, she co-ordinates the whole of Key Stage 2, and also religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT). She has taught music to the children currently in Year 6 since they were in Year 3, and her weekly lesson with them is 75 minutes.

Fig. 1. School 1, ranked 1/10

The expert: 'Classroom teaching is good overall. The teacher's knowledge, understanding and planning are very good. The pace of lessons is slick and the limited resources that are available are used well. However, the teacher could expect even more of pupils who already have considerable expertise on instruments, and these pupils could be challenged more effectively by more differentiated tasks which take account of their prior learning. Year 6 have a highly appropriate curriculum, with regular experience of singing, composing, performing on percussion instruments and their own instruments; practical tasks are appropriately linked to listening material, and based on different musical styles, periods and cultures. There is a clear commitment to equal opportunities in the school, and all pupils from Year 3 have a chance to learn an instrument, if they wish to, without selection tests. Over half of the Year 6 class have instrumental lessons.'

The inspectors (paraphrased): The music teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities designed to stimulate pupils' thinking and enjoyment. There is a good scheme of work which covers all programmes of study, and pupils make progress in developing their knowledge and skills of music.

The pupils: They perceive music to be 'very strong' in this school. They like classroom music, but become frustrated when they have to wait too long for their turn to play one of the limited number of classroom instruments owned by the school. The children who learn instruments at school have played in assemblies at some point during the year, and feel thoroughly involved, but this is less the case with those who take lessons privately.

The teacher: She feels that she teaches music successfully. She considers that the children respond well to the variety of tasks that she provides, and feel that they can participate, whatever their musical ability. She sees the Year 6 curriculum as providing a basic understanding of music and its elements that pupils can build on in Key Stage 3. She also wants children to enjoy music. She considers that the school's resources are adequate.

Music is embedded in the academic life of School 1, and the expert, inspectors, pupils and teacher write positively about it. Even so, there is scope for the achievement of pupils who learn instruments to be built on more effectively in classroom music lessons. And the school needs more classroom instruments, if pupils are not to waste some of their time waiting for a turn to play.

School 2

Music at School 2 is taught by a specialist who has worked at the school for five years, and

who visits for 1.5 days a week to teach music to all the classes, and rehearse the auditioned school choir. She works additional hours on a voluntary basis when the school puts on a show. There are no links with the work of the instrumental teachers, because they visit on different days. No-one monitors the specialist's work.

Fig. 2. *School 2, ranked 9/10*

The expert: 'The quality of teaching is poor. The teacher does not have an adequate knowledge of National Curriculum Programmes of Study and, as a result, the pupils have a very limited breadth of experience in music. Many of the activities are totally inappropriate: for example, learning time signatures, rests and note values in isolation from practical activity, undertaking Associated Board aural tests for grades 1–3, learning about the life of Mozart. Lessons are very slow to get going. The teacher clearly finds lessons which involve classroom instruments very uncomfortable to handle and the pupils spend a long time being lectured and told off and very little time playing. It is clear that pupils have had very little experience of using instruments indeed, which meant going "wild" as soon as they were able to hold one ... composition amounts to being given the words of a song and having to compose a melody for it, using manuscript paper (reminiscent of 'O' level!).'

The inspectors (paraphrased): 'Very little of the inspection period overlapped with the music specialist's visit to the school, and we only saw music lessons in Key Stage 1. They went well.'

The pupils: They do not enjoy singing songs such as 'Girls and boys, leave your toys' and 'Brother James's Air'. They do not enjoy the pieces of music they listen to in lessons. The pupils who learn instruments say that they are always encouraged and praised, but that the school is unaware of how good they are because only one of them has had a chance to play in a classroom lesson or in an assembly over the last year.

The teacher: She felt very confident in her role as the only curriculum specialist in the school, because of many years of teaching. She finds her work rewarding, because of her rapport with other staff and management. She hopes that Year 6 will take many happy memories of music-making to their secondary school.

Here, there is a serious mismatch between the views of the teacher and those of the expert and the pupils. The managers of this school have, in effect, abrogated their responsibility for music.

Discussion

We have seen that the ten primary schools were divided into three groups according to the expert's assessment of the quality of their music provision for pupils in Year 6, and that, accordingly, the quality of this music provision decreased monotonically from group to group. We have seen also that the five aspects of quality of provision, as judged by the

expert, that related most closely to the expert's overall judgements because they, too, decreased monotonically from group to group, were:

- the content, breadth and balance of the Year 6 curriculum
- the availability of suitably qualified music teachers
- the valuing of music at the school
- pupils' attitudes towards music at the school
- the extent to which musical activities were encouraged among all children at the school regardless of ability.

The difference in the content, breadth and balance of the Year 6 curriculum between the 'medium' and 'low' schools was slight.

We have seen also that quality of music provision cannot be secured simply by bringing in a 'specialist' to teach the subject. All three schools in the 'low' group had visiting music specialists, two of them provided by the local education authority (LEA), and yet the teachers were not suitably qualified, the curriculum was too narrow, music was not valued at the school, pupils' attitudes were poor, and musical activity was not encouraged among all children regardless of ability.

In contrast, music at the three schools ranked 'high' was taught to Year 6 by a class teacher at the school. Where the music teacher was not the children's own class teacher, she still, typically, knew them, because she had been their class teacher when they were younger. Where the music teacher was not a music graduate, she had nevertheless become suitably qualified to teach the subject through her enthusiasm and skills, and through applying what she knew of teaching the National Curriculum in general to teaching the National Curriculum in music. Music was valued throughout the school, pupils' attitudes were secure, and musical activity was encouraged among all children.

The qualifications, formal and informal, of the Year 6 music teachers at the four 'medium' schools lay, clearly, between these two extremes. At two of the schools, music was taught by class teachers who were less well qualified than those at the 'high' schools; elsewhere music was taught by visiting specialists who were better qualified than those at the 'low' schools.

Moving beyond the aspects judged by the expert, there was something else that decreased monotonically from group to group, and this was the capacity of teachers to assess pupils' musical skills and levels of interest. While the teachers in the 'high' schools were broadly in agreement with the expert, teachers became progressively more over-generous in the 'medium' schools and in the 'low' schools. With respect to pupils' musical skills, it is likely that teachers' over-generosity resulted from their lack of knowledge of the National Curriculum for music, and its expectations of pupils' skills in listening and appraising, singing, playing musical instruments and composing. With respect to pupils' interest, however, perhaps one can only speculate, somewhat sadly, that these teachers have never known the joy of working with children who are very interested in what they are being taught, and that they were consequently pleased by levels of interest that were quite low.

When one adds the judgements of pupils to those of the expert and the teachers, something happens that disrupts the monotonic progression from 'high' to 'medium' to 'low' schools. At the 'high' schools, the expert, the teacher and the pupils were in

agreement that the quality of music provision was high. At the 'low' schools, the expert and the pupils agreed that the quality of music provision was low, and the more generous view of the teacher may be explained in terms of his or her lack of knowledge of the National Curriculum for music, and the work of schools that are more successful in music. However, at the 'medium' schools, we found that the boys agreed with the expert, while the girls tended to reverse the 'high' and 'medium' schools. This may be a result of a link between 'the extent to which musical activities are encouraged among all children at the school regardless of ability' (expert) and favouritism, as judged by pupils. In the 'medium' schools, the girls were favoured, so their experience of the music provision was more favourable than that of the boys.

The analysis of pupils' views by cohort (Table 4) may also help to provide an explanation. Pupils at 'medium' schools who were 'gave ups' or 'nevers' were less likely to enjoy the music that their teacher taught, or to be praised for their work in music class. 'Nevers', in particular, were, of course, mainly boys.

Where does this leave the inspectors? This study has cast doubt on neither the rigour with which individual lessons are judged, nor the judgements made about provision for Year 6 in schools where music provision more generally is good. And some of the apparent discrepancies between what the expert found, and what the inspectors reported, may result from a change in provision between the two visits. Nevertheless, it does appear that, in schools where inspectors make only a limited number of lesson observations in music, there is a tendency for them to over-generalise from the good lessons that they see. Where inspectors find themselves wanting to make a judgement about the quality of provision for pupils in Year 6, without having seen any music lessons in Year 6, they might be advised to take into account pupils', particularly boys', answers to the following questions:

- How much does your teacher want you to pass exams?
- How much does your teacher like children best who are good at music?
- How much does your teacher make music classes interesting?
- How much does your teacher teach music that you like?
- How much does your teacher praise you for work in music class?

At the time of writing, OFSTED is consulting on whether to take account of secondary pupils' views during inspections. This study has suggested that it could be useful for them to consider the views of pupils in Year 6 also. Indeed, it is possible that the views of primary pupils may help inspectors to supplement their evidence base in a way that the views of secondary pupils may not. According to Eccles *et al.* (1996b), the changes that take place following the transition to secondary school may be developmentally inappropriate for many pupils, leading to an increase in negative views and a decrease in motivation. The changes that pupils experience are wide-ranging and include classroom organisation, instructional methods, task structure, task complexity, grouping practices, evaluation techniques, motivational strategies, locus of responsibility for learning, and quality of teacher–pupil and pupil–pupil relationships. The result of one or more of these changes, together with the increasing need in early adolescence to establish a sense of autonomy and personal efficacy, suggest a need for future research to examine more closely our understanding and interpretation of pupils' judgements of their music provision at both primary and secondary levels.

Acknowledgements

This study was made possible through funding provided by the Economic and Social Research Council and OFSTED. We would like to thank, Margaret Dickinson, Katherine Ryan and Antonia Ivaldi for their valuable research assistance. We would also like to thank pupils and teachers at the schools that agreed to participate.

Notes

- 1 The relationship between each of the 38 aspects that the expert rated and the allocation of the schools to groups was considered using one-way ANOVA, with the level of significance set relatively low ($p < .01$) in order to control for the use of multiple tests. Post hoc Tukey B tests were used to show where in the sequence of three groupings significant results lay. The results of these tests for the five aspects that met the criterion $p < .01$ are shown in Table 1.
- 2 Arithmetic mean.
- 3 Standard deviation.
- 4 F is the ratio between variances, customarily called 'F' after the statistician R. A. Fisher.
- 5 Probability.
- 6 $p > 0.05$ for 31 aspects as follows: socio-economic circumstances of pupils; pupils' standards of achievement in music; progress of pupils' learning in Year 6 music; pupils' learning skills in Year 6 music; pupils' attitudes to their learning in Year 6 music; objectives of Year 6 music lessons; teachers' command of the subject for Year 6 music; lesson content and activities for Year 6 music; challenge, pace and motivation in Year 6 music lessons; teachers' expectations of pupils in Year 6 music; music curriculum planning and organisation; extra-curricular provision in music; arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with differing ability in Year 6 music; quality of the leadership and management of music; the contribution of the ethos and direction of the school to high standards and quality in music; working relationships to achieve common goals in music; quality of learning resources (instruments and equipment); efficiency and effectiveness with which music resources are deployed; sufficiency of the music accommodation; management of music accommodation; use of music accommodation; availability of instrumental tuition; opportunity for pupils to participate in musical activities at the school; the profile of music at the school; the extent to which music is viewed as a strength of the school; the range of activities available within classroom-based music; the range of activities available in addition to classroom-based music; the extent to which musical activities are offered to all children at the school; are all children given the opportunity to learn to play instruments; does the school have a selection procedure of providing children with instrumental music lessons. A further two aspects – 'quality of learning resources (music and teacher support)' and 'arrangements to meet gender needs in Year 6' – had reported significance that was spurious as it depended on missing values.
- 7 The relationship between each of the 12 aspects that the 329 children rated and the expert's allocation of the schools to groups was considered using a one-way ANOVA, with the level of significance set relatively low ($p < .01$) in order to control for the use of multiple tests. Table 2 shows the results of these tests for all the 12 aspects. Post hoc Tukey B tests were used to show where in the sequence of three groupings significant results lay. Table 3 shows a breakdown by gender for the five aspects for which significant results ($p < .01$) are shown in Table 2. Table 4 shows a breakdown by cohort for the five aspects for which significant results are shown in Table 2. The children were divided into three cohorts according to whether they were currently learning an instrument (player) ($n = 214$), formerly took lessons on an instrument but have given up (gave up) ($n = 66$) or have never taken lessons on an instrument (never) ($n = 49$). Post hoc Tukey B tests were used to show where in the cohort sequence significant results lay.

- 8 Not significant.
- 9 The relationship between each of the seven aspects that eight teachers used to rate 221 children, and the expert's allocation of the schools to groups, was considered using a one-way ANOVA, with the level of significance set relatively low ($p < .01$) in order to control for the use of multiple tests. Table 5 shows the results of these tests for all seven aspects. A post hoc Tukey B test was used to show where in the sequence of three groupings the significant result lay. Table 6 shows a breakdown by gender and cohort for teachers' ratings of children's skills at composing.

References

- BARNES, L. R. & SHINN-TAYLOR, C. (1988) 'Teacher competency and the primary school curriculum: a survey of five schools in north-east England'. *British Educational Research Journal*, **14**, 3, 283–95.
- ECCLES, J., LORD, S. & BUCHANAN, C. M. (1996a) 'School transitions in early adolescence: what are we doing to our young people?' In J. A. Graber, J. Brooks-Gunn and A. C. Peterson (Eds.), *Transitions Through Adolescence: Interpersonal Domains and Contexts*. New Jersey, USA: Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- ECCLES, J., LORD, S. & ROESER, R. (1996b) 'Round holes, square pegs, rocky roads, and sore feet: the impact of stage-environment fit on young adolescents' experiences in schools and families'. In D. Clochetti and S. L. Toth (Eds.), *Rochester Symposium on Developmental Psychopathology. Adolescence: Opportunities and Challenges*. New York: Rochester.
- HARLAND, J., KINDER, K., LORD, P., STOTT, A., SCHAGEN, I. & HAYNES, J. (2000) *Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness*. Slough: NFER.
- LAWSON, D., PLUMMERIDGE, C. & SWANWICK, K. (1994) 'Music and the National Curriculum in primary schools'. *British Journal of Music Education*, **11**, 1, 3–14.
- MILLS, J. (1989) 'The generalist primary teacher of music: a problem of confidence'. *British Journal of Music Education*, **6**, 2, 125–38.
- MILLS, J. (1994) 'Music in the National Curriculum: the first year'. *British Journal of Music Education*, **11**, 3, 191–6.
- NORTH, A. C., HARGREAVES, D. J. & O'NEILL, S. A. (2000) 'The importance of music to adolescents'. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **70**, 255–72.
- O'NEILL, S. A. (1999) 'The role of motivation in the practice and achievement of young musicians'. In Suk Won Yi (Ed.), *Music, Mind and Science*. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.
- OFSTED (1995) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1993–94*. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1996) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1994–95*. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1997) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1995–96*. London: The Stationery Office.
- OFSTED (1998) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1996–97*. London: The Stationery Office.
- OFSTED (1999) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1997–98*. London: The Stationery Office.
- OFSTED (2000) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education, 1998–99*. London: The Stationery Office.
- ROSS, M. & KAMBA, M. (1997) *The State of the Arts in Five English Secondary Schools*. Exeter: University of Exeter.
- SLOBODA, J. A. & HOWE, M. J. A. (1992) 'Transitions in the early careers of able young musicians: choosing instruments and teachers'. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, **40**, 283–94.

Evaluating school music provision for children aged 10–11 years

WRAGG, E. C., BENNETT, S. N. & CARRE, C. G. (1989) 'Teachers' worries over National Curriculum revealed'. *Junior Education* **13**, 6.